

Dear Honorable Judge Hilton,

My name is William Budington and I am a Senior Staff Technologist for the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF). I have advised our legal team on cases involving digital civil liberties, led technology projects installed on millions of computers, and spoken at conferences worldwide on topics involving Internet privacy and security. This letter is written in my personal capacity, as a close friend and colleague of Chelsea Manning. As someone who knows her convictions and level of commitment to social change, I am hoping you will strongly consider her release.

Chelsea has shown many times, both in public and in private conversation, that her decision to leak classified documents to the press was a decision based on her moral conviction and commitment to protecting not only the American people but people around the world. In an interview with ABC's *Nightline*, she explained:

"We're getting all this information from all these different sources and it's just death, destruction, mayhem ... We're filtering it all through facts, statistics, reports, dates, times, locations, and eventually, you just stop. I stopped seeing just statistics and information, and I started seeing people."

She has never wavered in her moral convictions despite what she could potentially lose: her military position, her future, or her freedom. She carries her deep level of conviction through everything she does. This extends to her inability to ever testify in the matters before the grand jury.

I am writing at the request of Ms. Manning's legal team to confirm that when faced with the prospect of jail time or testifying in spite of her political beliefs, she will choose jail time without equivocation or hesitation. Because of this, keeping her confined serves no purpose for the court.

I hope you find this information useful and thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter.

Sincerely,



William Budington